



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Held Wednesday, March 17, 1999, For the purpose of meeting with representatives of the Greenbelt Association for the Visual Arts (GAVA).

The meeting began at 8:08 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Greenbelt Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull Thomas X. White and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David E. Moran, City Clerk; Joe McNeal, Community Center Supervisor and Sarah Schaffer, Recreation Coordinator

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Barbara Simon and Jessica Gitlis, GAVA; Bob Snyder, Eileen Peterson and Karl Hille, Gazette Newspapers

Mayor Davis began by stating that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss GAVA's proposal. Ms. Gitlis outlined the proposal which contained 3 options. She noted that she and Ms. Simon were spending a significant number of hours on administrative work and grant seeking and were asking the city for additional funds to cover this and provide additional salary to Ms. Gitlis and Ms. Simon.

Mr. White asked about the status of the Arts Coordinator position. Mr. McLaughlin responded that as of this moment the Arts Coordinator position is included in the proposed budget. He noted that details regarding the position and its interaction with GAVA had not been worked out. Mr. White believed the Coordinator would help reduce the administrative burden but didn't know what the equation would be.

Mayor Davis asked if GAVA would still need the funding with an Arts Coordinator. Ms. Gitlis indicated the costs are only part administrative and would still be there. Ms. Simon stated that her philosophy of an Arts Coordinator would be an overall approach to the arts city-wide. She noted she and Ms. Gitlis would welcome an Arts Coordinator.

Mr. White stated that the program is self-sustaining with the exception of the additional administrative time. Ms. Simon agreed and stated that non-profit arts organizations typically are not self sustaining. Mr. White asked about the ineligibility for State grants. Ms. Simon responded that the MD State Arts Council does not fund organizations that spend more than 40% of their budget on education programs. She noted that the city could apply for additional arts funding under its auspices.

Mr. McLaughlin questioned why GAVA was classified as arts education. Ms. Gitlis noted that GAVA primarily does education as opposed to other organizations that do plays, exhibits, etc.

Ms. Gitlis noted that the Arts Council did not want to fund schools and this was the reason for the policy.

Ms. Davis asked about GAVA's space needs. Ms. Simon indicated that the existing classrooms provided enough space for programming. She indicated a need for office space.

Mr. Roberts asked about GAVA's plans to increase programming. Ms. Simon described examples of new programming. Ms. Gitlis noted that some clients are turned away when classes are full.

Mr. Roberts asked if there would be a loss if GAVA were absorbed into the city. Ms. Simon believed that if she and Ms. Gitlis were hired as contract employees, then GAVA would become an advocacy/support group.

Mr. Turnbull asked about the city's art program prior to GAVA and the Community Center. Mr. McNeal responded that the city offered programs through the Recreation Department. Mr. White noted the pottery program at the Youth Center and the summer camp programs contained arts elements.

Mr. Roberts asked staff about the difference in the amount of equipment and rate of pay for teachers, etc between GAVA and the city's previous programs. He believed the city's art program was more professional and had grown. Mr. McNeal responded that staff had initial concerns about GAVA's fees, but indicated that GAVA was hiring higher quality instructors. Mr. Roberts believed people were willing to pay more for higher quality programs.

Mr. McNeal believed the Arts Coordinator was needed and would help address some of GAVA's needs. He stated the opportunities for an Arts Coordinator were endless.

Mayor Davis thanked GAVA for their efforts and for starting the program in the first place and indicated that this issue would be discussed at budget time.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran, CMC
City Clerk